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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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KK/AJ

S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	<b>INDIA AND THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE</b>
2.	<b>UNDERSTANDING CURBS ON RICE EXPORTS</b>
3.	<b>INDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN SPORTS</b>

## INDIA AND THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE

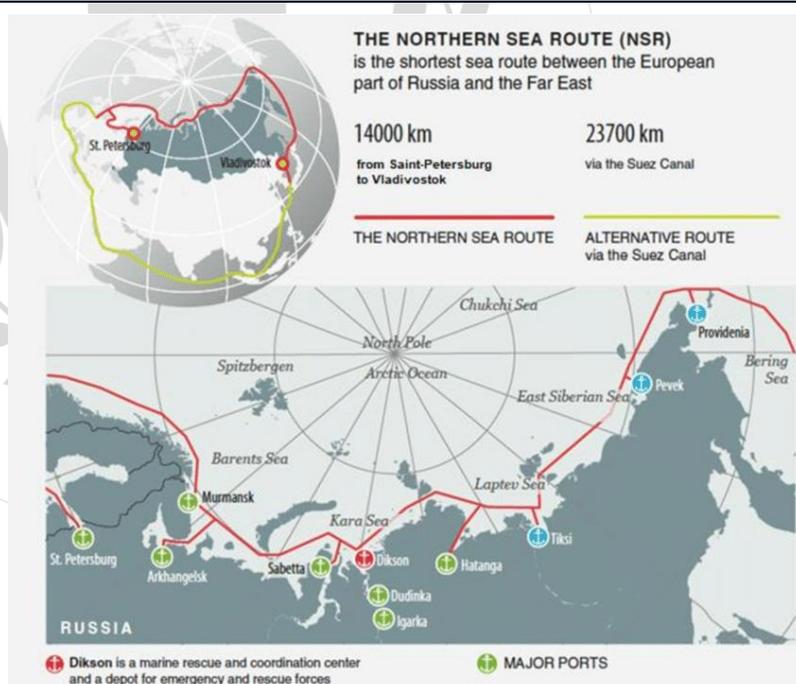
SOURCE: [The Hindu](#)

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

- The **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**'s starting point in **Murmansk**, also known as the **capital of the Arctic region**, is seeing an increase in **cargo traffic** from India.
- India received a share of **35% of the eight million tons** of cargo handled by the **Murmansk port**, which is located around 2,000 kilometers northwest of Moscow, Russia, in the first seven months of 2023.

### NORTHERN SEA ROUTE:

- The **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, commonly referred to as the **Northeast Passage**, is a **maritime shipping route** that follows the **northern coast of Eurasia** running for about 5600km.
- Compared to the conventional routes that travel through the Suez Canal or around the southern edge of Africa, it is a noticeably **shorter route between Europe and Asia**.



#### ➤ Geographical location:

- It starts from the **North Atlantic** and travels into the **Arctic Ocean**, weaving through the **Barents, Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi Seas** as it moves eastward along Russia's northern coasts.
- **The Bering Strait**, which connects to the Pacific Ocean, marks the end of the route.

## WHY IS THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE IMPORTANT FOR INDIA?

- **Historical relationship:** The **Svalbard Treaty in 1920** established a relationship between India and the Arctic Council, which is still active today.
- **Reduced Shipping Distance and Time:** This route helps in shorter transit times and shipping distances for India's exports and imports to and from Europe, Russia, and northern Asia.
- **Access to Arctic Resources:** The Arctic region is home to significant **mineral, oil, and natural gas reserves**. Accessing these resources becomes easier as a **result of climate change as the ice cover melts**.
- **Strategic Alliances:** India's alliances with **Arctic nations like Russia** could promote **cooperation on trade and exploration** in the region. **Russia**, a **significant contributor** to the **development of the NSR**, would present chances for India to participate in Arctic initiatives.
- **Global maritime Influence:** India can demonstrate its influence as a major participant by engaging in pertaining to **international shipping laws, security, and the environment**.
- **Environment and Climate Change:** India's **water security and economy** may be impacted by the Arctic's vulnerability to climate change.

## INDIAN ENGAGEMENT IN THE NORTH SEA ROUTE:

1. <b>Observer status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2013, the Arctic Council gave India observer status. India is now able to take part in debates about the Arctic, especially those concerning the NSR and its implications for geopolitics and the environment.</li></ul>
2. <b>Research and scientific expeditions.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Indian Arctic Expedition (IndARC), a multidisciplinary research project that focused on <b>atmospheric, oceanic, and geophysical studies</b>, was carried out in 2014 by India.</li><li>• <b>Himadri Station</b> for understanding the <b>impact of climate change</b> in the Arctic.</li></ul>
3. <b>Trade in the region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With a growth rate of over 73% between 2018 and 2022, the <b>NSR's growing cargo traffic</b> is in line with India's <b>rising imports of coal and Russian crude oil</b>.</li></ul>
4. <b>Infrastructure development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• India's interest in the NSR is increased by the <b>Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) project</b>, which provides a quicker and more effective trading route.</li></ul>

## WAY AHEAD:

Here are some of the future prospects of the Northern Sea Route for India:

- **Achieving sustainable development goals:** The region can address the **energy needs** of India. Also, the Government of India's **Arctic Policy 2022** says that the economic development of the region is in line with the **UN SDGs**.

- **Collaborations with Russia:** The **sole nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet** in the world is found in Russia, ensuring year-round service. The **NSR infrastructure manager, Rosatom**, is committed to this. This can help India in enhancing **trade and other development initiatives**.
- **Geopolitical influence:** India also aims to **counteract** the potential **combined influence of China and Russia over the NSR**.



## UNDERSTANDING CURBS ON RICE EXPORTS

SOURCE: [The Hindu](#), PIB

### WHY IN THE NEWS?

- The Indian government has **banned the export of white rice**, imposed a **20% export levy** on **par-boiled** rice until October 15, and **allowed the export of Basmati rice** for contracts worth at least \$1,200 per ton in an effort to **control domestic rice prices and guarantee domestic food security**.
- However, it is **permitted** based on the **government's approval** given to other nations to **meet their needs for food security** and based on their **request**.

### WHY DID THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSE THIS BAN?

- **Food security:** We can make sure that the rice supply is used to **satisfy domestic demand**. This helps **avert any shortages** and guarantees that citizens have **access to basic food items**.
  - Low rice stocks could endanger the **public distribution system (PDS)** and the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** under the **National Food Security Act 2013**.
- **Price stabilization:** Export restrictions can **stop domestic rice prices from rising**. This aids in keeping **rice prices reasonable** for **the local populace**, which is crucial for **low-income households** in particular.
  - According to the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare's third Advanced Estimate**, rice **production decreased** 13.8% during Rabi 2022–2023, from 184.71 lakh tons to 158.95 lakh tons.
- **Disaster response:** An export ban can ensure that the available rice cases where there is a **natural disaster, crop failure, or other interruptions to the agricultural supply chain**.
  - The **International Food Policy Research Institute**, warns of **rising rice prices** of about **16%** as a result of **production deficits** brought on by the severe impacts of this **year's El Nino**.
- **Bioethanol Production:** Sugarcane is used to make bioethanol, but **cereals, primarily rice**, are also used. About 80% of the ethanol produced in India is made from sugarcane juice while rice makes up the remaining **about 18%**.
  - According to information provided by the **Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, about 81,044 tons of FCI rice were allotted in the ethanol supply year (December-November) 2020-21.

### RICE IN INDIA:

1. Climatic conditions required for cultivation

- A hot, humid atmosphere.
- Areas with continuous sunshine, and a reliable supply of water.
- Soil: Clay or clay loam soils.
- Average temperature between 21 and 37 C.

2. <b>Types of rice varieties produced in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basmati rice, black rice, red rice, Mogra rice, sticky rice, wild rice</li> </ul>
3. <b>Nutritional value of rice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an important source of <b>carbohydrates (starch)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Husked rice</b> has a <b>protein</b> content of about 7-12%</li> </ul>
4. <b>Area under crop production.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About <b>23%</b> of the <b>gross cropped area</b>.</li> </ul>
5. <b>Crop production practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dry or Semi-dry</b> upland cultivation</li> <li>• <b>Wet or low land cultivation (Transplantation)</b></li> <li>• <b>System of Rice Intensification</b></li> </ul>
6. <b>Leading producers of rice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>West Bengal, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh</b> contribute <b>72%</b> of the rice production in India.</li> </ul>
7. <b>GI-tagged rice varieties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marcha Rice (Bihar)</li> <li>• Chak Hao (Manipur)</li> <li>• Gobindbhog rice (West Bengal)</li> </ul>
8. <b>Exports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India is <b>the leading exporter of rice</b> in the world followed by Thailand, Vietnam, and Pakistan.</li> <li>• <b>Major export destinations:</b> Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, USA</li> <li>• India is the <b>leading exporter of Basmati rice</b> in the world. (2/3 global supply)</li> </ul>
9. <b>Government Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimum support price</b> (Ministry of Agriculture)</li> <li>• <b>Minimum Export Policy</b> by APEDA</li> <li>• <b>Fortification of Rice</b> under PDS</li> <li>• <b>National food security mission</b></li> </ul>

#### WAY AHEAD:

- **Policy priorities:** Governmental **economic and social priorities** can have an effect on the agricultural industry. Governments may decide to impose export limits in accordance with their priorities, which may **include rural development, farmer welfare, and economic security**.
- **Market dynamics and consumer demand:** This can have an impact on export choices as well as production levels. Based on **shifting spending trends**, nations with a **developing middle class** may balance their local supply and exports.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Concerns:** This may have an impact on **agricultural practices** and **output levels**. Environmental protection and sustainable agriculture are receiving more attention influencing **future export decisions**.
- **Global trade relations:** A nation's policies on export restrictions may be influenced by the **harmony between domestic food security and commitments to worldwide commerce**. Trade agreements, discussions, and connections with trading partners will all be important.

### PRELIMS SPECIFIC: MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

- The Indian government uses the Minimum Support Price (MSP) as a kind of **market intervention** to **protect farmers** from a **sudden drop in farm prices**.

#### **Who decides MSP?**

- On the basis of the **recommendations** of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**, the **Ministry of Agriculture**, Government of India set the prices for a few crops at the **start of the sowing season**.

#### **Major objectives:**

- Help the farmers through **distress sales**.
- Procure food grains for **public distribution**.

#### **Crops covered:**

- The government announces **fair and remunerative pricing (FRP)** for **sugarcane** as well as **minimum support prices (MSPs)** for **22 mandatory crops**.
- The **14 kharif season** crops, **6 rabi season crops**, and **two extra commercial crops** are covered.
- The list of crops is:
  - Cereals (7) - paddy, wheat, barley, jowar, bajra, maize and ragi.
  - Pulses (5) - gram, arhar/tur, moong, urad and lentil
  - Oilseeds (8) - groundnut, rapeseed/mustard, toria, soyabean, sunflower seed, sesamum, safflower seed and Niger seed
  - Raw cotton
  - Raw jute
  - Copra
  - De-husked coconut
  - Sugarcane (Fair and remunerative price)
  - Virginia flu cured (VFC) tobacco



## INDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN SPORTS

SOURCE: [The Indian Express](#)

### WHY IN NEWS?

Neeraj Chopra's historic victory in the javelin throw competition at the **World Athletics Championships 2023** has garnered a lot of praise from India's best athletes on social media, representing the pride and happiness of the whole country.



- The **Athletics Federation of India**, the apex body for the athletics in India, took the decision to celebrate **August 7 as the National Javelin Day** to commemorate Neeraj Chopra's historic gold medal during the Tokyo Olympics.
- Every year on **August 29**, India celebrates **National Sports Day**.
- It is observed to mark the **anniversary of the birth of hockey legend Major Dhyhan Chand Singh**.

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN SPORTS IN THE RECENT TIMES

- **Athletics: Neeraj Chopra**, a sensation in the javelin throw, kept impressing in the 2023 World Athletics Championship by winning the gold medal.
- **Wrestling:** Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, two bright lights in the world of wrestling, won bronze medals at the 2022 World Championships.
- **Chess:** Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, a grandmaster (GM) of chess from India, defeated Magnus Carlsen, the current global chess champion.
- **Football:** India has advanced significantly in the realm of international football because to the inspirational Sunil Chhetri. Considering their rating of 106 in March 2023, the team's recent performances in the Intercontinental and SAFF Cup have helped them move up to rank 99 in the most recent FIFA rankings.
- **Badminton:** PV Sindhu won gold at 2020 Olympics games.

### MAJOR SPORTS AWARDS IN INDIA:

Award	Description	Recipient
<b>Major Dhyhan Chand Khel Ratna Award</b>	Highest sporting honor in India, awarded for outstanding performance in sports over the last four years.	Individual or team
<b>Arjuna Award</b>	Awarded for distinguished performance in sports over the last four years.	Individual or team
<b>Dronacharya Award</b>	Awarded to coaches for their outstanding contribution to sports.	Individual
<b>Major Dhyhan Chand Award</b>	Awarded to sportspersons for their lifetime achievement in sports.	Individual

<b>Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy</b>	Awarded to the best sportsperson of the year in the disability category.	Individual
<b>Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar</b>	Awarded to individuals or organizations for their outstanding contribution to the promotion of sports in India.	Individual or organization

